

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 01242 171047Z POSS DUPE
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
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-----171400Z 064052 /43

R 171001Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
SECSTATE WASHDC 8294
CINCPAC HONOLULU
INFO AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1242

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY BANGKOK DATED JAN
17, REPEATED YOUR STATIONS:

QUOTE
SONGKHLA #0012

E.O.: 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: THAI MALAYSIAN OPERATION ON SOUTHERN BORDER

REF: SONGKHLA #0008

SUMMARY: THAI-MALAYSIAN JOINT OPERATION DIRECTED AGAINST COMMUNIST
PARTY OF MALAYA (CPM) POSITIONS IN SADAU DISTRICT OF SONGKHLA BEGAN
JAN. 14. THREE BATTALIONS OF MALAYSIAN ARMY TROOPS ARE NOW
OPERATING ON THAI SIDE OF THE BORDER IN COORDINATION WITH THAI
FORCE OF BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) AND ROYAL THAI ARMY (RTA).
OPERATION IS SCHEDULED TO LAST THREE WEEKS BUT LOCAL OFFICIALS
SAY THIS TIME FRAME COULD BE EXTENDED. END SUMMARY

1. FIRST JOINT THAI-MALAYSIAN BORDER OPERATION SINCE REMOVAL OF
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POLICE FIELD FORCE FROM BETONG IN MAY 1976 BEGAN IN SADAU DISTRICT
OF SONGKHLA JAN. 14. OPERATION IS DIRECTED AGAINST CPM BASES
IN SADAU. THREE BATTALIONS OF MALAYSIAN TROOPS NOW OPERATING ON
THAI SIDE OF THE BORDER ARE THE FIRST BATTALION OF THE 18TH ROYAL
MALAY REGIMENT AND THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH RANGER BATTALIONS.
TWO MORE BATALLIONS ARE REPORTEDLY IN RESERVE IN ALOR STAR AND
COULD BE COMMITTED TO THE OPERATION. THAI FORCE PRIMARILY BPP

BUT INCLUDES TWO RTA INFANTRY COMPANIES. PRESS REPORTS OF OVER 4000 TROOPS IN SADAO ARE PROBABLY EXAGGERATED, BUT THERE APPEAR TO BE MORE TROOPS OPERATING IN ONE DISTRICT OF SONGKHLA THAN TOTAL NUMBER COMMITTED IN ALL OTHER PROVINCES IN THE SOUTH DURING RECENT OPERATION.

2. BASIC STRATEGY IS FOR TWO FORCES TO CONVERGE ON CPM CONCENTRATIONS WHICH WILL BE HEAVILY HIT WITH AIR STRIKES AND ARTILLERY FIRST. THAI HAVE ESTABLISHED TEN NEW CHECKPOINTS IN SADAO AND HAT YAI DISTRICTS OF SONGKHLA IN EFFORT TO INTERCEPT INSURGENTS WHO TRY TO ESCAPE.

3. OPERATION OF GREAT INTEREST LOCALLY. EVENING OF JAN. 14 HAT YAI TELEVISION CARRIED FILM OF MALAYSIAN TROOPS AND ARMOR POURING OVER THAI BORDER. MALAYSIANS ARE REPORTEDLY DELIGHTED WITH PROSPECT OF GETTING VALUABLE COMBAT EXPERIENCE AND SOME ARE ALREADY TALKING ABOUT MOVING ON TO BETONG. THAI OFFICIALS ARE MORE SUBDUED. THEY ENDORSE MALAYSIAN PARTICIPATION FOR THE MOST PART AND HOPE MALAYSIANS WILL ASSUME MAJOR ROLE IN CARRYING THE BATTLE TO THE CPM. AT THE SAME TIME, TRADITIONAL THAI SENSITIVITY OVER SOVEREIGNTY AND FOREIGN TROOPS ON THAI SOIL BRISTLES BENEATH THE SURFACE.

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4. SONGKHLA VICE GOVERNOR CHAROENCHIT NA SONGKHLA SAID JAN. 14 THAT ALTHOUGH OPERATION IS SCHEDULED TO LAST JUST THREE WEEKS IT COULD BE EXTENDED. HE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT IF OPERATION LASTS TOO LONG THAI MIGHT RUN OUT OF FUNDS TO KEEP TROOPS IN THE FIELD AND MALAYSIANS WOULD END UP RUNNING THEIR OWN OPERATION IN THAILAND.

5. COMMENT: JOINT OPERATION IS INDICATIVE OF IMPROVED THAI-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS WHICH SOURED AFTER EXPULSION OF MALAYSIAN FIELD FORCE FROM BETONG LAST YEAR. PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE MALAYSIANS HAVE ALREADY OCCUPIED SEVERAL SMALL CPM CAMPS AND IF OPERATION IS SUSTAINED CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT CPM INFLUENCE IN SADAO WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. IF MALAYSIANS MANAGE TO AVOID BRUISING THAI SENSITIVITIES MORE SUCH OPERATIONS WOULD BE LOGICAL. AT SAME TIME, SUCCESS AGAINST CPM IN SADAO IS NOT THE KEY TO COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE SOUTHERN REGION. BULK OF INSURGENT ACTIONS IN THE SOUTH DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER WHICH PROVOKED THAI COUNTER OFFENSIVE WERE NOT INITIATED BY CPM BUT BY CPT, PRIMARILY IN SURAT THANI AND NAKORN SRI THAMMARAT. ON

BALANCE CPT REMAINS A BIGGER THREAT IN THE SOUTH. HOPEFULLY FAN-
FARE AND PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS AGAINST CPM WITH MALAYSIAN ASSISTANCE
WILL NOT DEFLECT ATTENTION OF RTG LEADERS FROM MORE FUNDAMENTAL
POLITICAL AND MILITARY THREAT TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY REPRESENTED
BY CPT. SIGNED HAMILTON. UNQUOTE.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Sent Date: 17-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Errors: N/A
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